

U.S. Comments on the proposed draft text of the International Aquatic Animal Health Code June 2003 Report

General Comments

Chapter 1.1.2

Disease Notification Criteria and Diseases Listed by the OIE

The United States supports the proposal included in the report for disease listing criteria. This is a major step forward in that it outlines the criteria by which diseases become listed. We believe that this systematic approach replaces a somewhat arbitrary manner in which aquatic disease agents have been listed in the past. We also believe that the “Criteria for urgent notification of aquatic animal diseases” described in the document for non-listed diseases will enable countries to add diseases that are not now listed in an acceptable manner.

New List of Notifiable Diseases Based on New Listing Criteria – *Mikrocytos mackini* delisting (Appendix IX of the report). We strongly agree with the proposal not to retain Infection with *Mikrocytos mackini* (Denman Island Disease) of Pacific oysters on the list of OIE notifiable diseases. This disease clearly does not meet the proposed criteria of (1) causing significant production losses or (2) negatively affecting wild aquatic animal populations nor (3) is it of public health concern. We are pleased to see that the scientific committee has accurate information available to it and was able to make this correct determination.

New List of Notifiable Diseases Based on New Listing Criteria –diseases other than that caused by *Mikrocytos mackini* (Appendix IX of the report). We also support the proposed delisting of *Haplosporidium nelsoni* and *Haplosporidium costale*, diseases of the Eastern oyster (*Crassostrea virginica*). Although *Haplosporidium nelsoni* has been a serious disease of eastern oysters, haplosporidia, in general, do not cause high levels of morbidity and mortality in their hosts. In addition, these haplosporidia require an intermediate host for disease transmission to occur.